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NORTHERN TOUR.

Todmorden, 17th January, 1830.

In my last, I brought down the account of my tour to Saturday, the ninth of this month, on which day I had been at Stockport, and had delivered a lecture at the theatre there, to a most respectable and numerous audience, the magistrates having taken for themselves the stage-box. We were entertained there in the most generous and hospitable manner by a family whose circle formed, to make use of a French phrase, something *à peindre*. Three tradesmen of the town took upon themselves the arrangement and management of the whole affair; gave out the notices; made all the preparations in the most judicious manner; attended to the pecuniary part of the concern, and declared themselves amply rewarded by a shake of the hand from me.

From Stockport, we returned back to Manchester, or rather to Smedley Lane, that night; passed the Sunday at Smedley, and, on Monday evening, went to Oldham. I was aware of the enthusiasm that would prevail amongst the good and sincere men of that very populous place, and, therefore, I deferred my arrival in it to as late an hour as possible, wishing, by all means, to avoid the collecting of a great multitude together. In spite of all my precautions, and in spite of the darkness of the evening, the people were collected in great numbers. It was with great difficulty that we got into the inn to which we drove, and with still greater difficulty that we got into the place provided for the lecture; and I was compelled to take the carriage again to go from the inn to that place, it appearing to be ab-

solutely impossible to go along on foot through the crowd. As it was, when I got into the place, and particularly the next day, my two hands were as sore as if they had been beaten with sticks: a pleasant pain, however, when I reflected that it proceeded from the squeezes of the hard hands of labouring men. Several young men, in particular, in all the pride of health and strength, approached to be permitted to touch that hand from the movement of which they had experienced, as they said, so much instruction and delight. There is no playhouse at Oldham; but a very good and spacious place had been provided, though with considerable expense and trouble to prop up the floor. There had been a committee formed for these purposes, who had taken the management of the whole matter into their own hands; to them I left every thing, coming away as soon as the lecture was over, and telling Mr. FIRTON, the surgeon, of Royton, that, as to the money affair, I left it wholly to his discretion and that of committee; and any money that they might have to give me, they might, at their convenience, deposit with Mr. JOHNSON, of Manchester; but, before the next day at noon, the money was sent to Mr. JOHNSON, and in amount a great deal larger than I either expected or wished. The next day, Tuesday, the twelfth, I proceeded to Bolton in the afternoon; got there at dusk, and found my friends in a state of uncertainty about my arrival. Nevertheless, short as the notice was, the theatre was pretty nearly full, the audience consisting, in great part, of the most opulent persons in the town. Here I found out my old friend, JOHN HAYES, who was put into prison in the month of November, 1819, by the magistrates of this place, for committing the crime of going round the town, with a bell, to inform the people, that their countryman, WILLIAM COBBETT, had arrived from America, in good health. JOHN HAYES, who is a poor, but very industrious man, now between fifty and sixty years of age, was taken up for the above crime, and ordered to

give bail, which he refused to do. They kept him in prison *ten weeks*, and he was liberated at the Sessions for want of some one to make a charge against him. Poor as he is, he found a sixpence to go to the lecture, and did not come near me till I sent for him. I gave him a shilling a week for the time that he was in prison, to begin with, and I left with Mr. JEREMIAH BRANDRETH, five shillings a week for eighteen weeks to come. I found, at Bolton, that all the stories of the LEEDS MERCURY, that great maudlin liar of the North, and those of its brother liar, the Manchester Guardian; I found that all their stories about the improvement in trade at Bolton, were utterly destitute of truth; that the contrary was the fact; that the decline was gradual, and continued to proceed; that the families of weavers were being sent away to their parishes in all directions; and that the wages of the weavers was so low, that three and nine-pence a week formed the common earnings of a man; and that the misery was so great as scarcely to admit of an adequate description.

The next day, Wednesday the 13th, I proceeded to Preston; not with the intention of offering myself as a lecturer to the once rich ruffians of that place, towards whom I felt nothing but resentment and contempt. I gave notice that I would address the people on the Thursday, at half-past twelve o'clock, from the same window that I used to address them from at the election. They assembled in great numbers, and the greater part of their masters along with them. Every thing that I could say in the way of jibe, contempt, and hatred towards those masters, I said; telling them, at the same time, that I had come on purpose to mock them before the face of their men; to express my pleasure that some of them had already been broken up, and that the rest were trembling in their shoes, and that their final ruin was at hand. The main body of their masters was in a group within hearing, but as much out of my sight as they could get. I saw them, however, I pointed to them with my hand, turned the eyes of their men upon them; reminded them of their base tyranny in forbidding their men to vote for me, and asked them how they could

possibly have the conscience to complain, and how they could possibly be in distress, when they had, to take care of their affairs and their interests, two such consummate statesmen as STANLEY and WOOD, one of whom was already found to be worth 1,500*l.* a year of the public money, and the other of whom would, in all likelihood, not fail to prove himself equally worthy as soon as possible. After having endeavoured to remove from the minds of these poor men some errors that they had imbibed with respect to the causes of their distress, and after having bestowed on their tyrants, as I justly called them, every species of reproach that suggested itself to my mind, I left the people with observing, that it was impossible for the devil himself to render their lot worse than it already was, but that they might console themselves with the reflection, and with the certainty, that one of three things would take place. The destruction of the system of corruption and tyranny; a return to the base paper-money, and all the consequences attending it; or the almost total ruin of their tyrannical masters. Having thus taken my leave of them, I prepared to set off for Rochdale, and, as I came out of the town, I saw SAM. HORROCKS plodding towards home in a pensive mood. I did not see brother PETER there; and I understood that he had quitted "proud Preston" some time before. There were two or three of the tyrant-masters who had become bankrupts since the election, at which I expressed my satisfaction.

Just as I was coming off, I found my carriage suddenly detained at the suit of one HOFFMAN. This Hoffman is a shoemaker, and professed great patriotism at the beginning of the late election; but he behaved in such a way, that SIR THOMAS BEEVOR, who had the control of the expenditure, absolutely refused to have anything more to do with him. He is a man perfectly illiterate, but by no means deficient in point of assurance. There required some person on the hustings, who knew all the people in the town, to assert the right of my friends to be admitted to vote. HOFFMAN took upon him that office. GRIMSHAW, the mayor, threatened to commit him to prison if he interfered without having

authority from the candidate. The bustling chap came running to me to the inn, to get a line under my hand, telling the mayor that I appointed him my advocate, or agent, for the business. Old Nic kept this paper; and, a little while ago, gave it (as I was informed) to HOFFMAN, whether with advice or not I cannot say. Upon this, HOFFMAN goes to an attorney. They hear of my intention of coming to Preston; and trump up a charge of ten pounds due to HOFFMAN, as my "legal advocate" on the hustings. The laws of the *borough*, it seems, authorize a seizure such as was made of the carriage; and enable the Borough Court to decide upon the case. I had appointed to be at Rochdale in the afternoon, so that I gave bail, released the carriage, and left my friend, Mr. THOMAS SMITH, of Liverpool, (who had the kindness to meet me at Preston,) to settle the matter as he pleased. What he did do, I do not yet know, and it is not of much importance. A good lesson, however, for the future, and a proof of the soundness of the judgment of SIR THOMAS BEEVOR, who, from the first, protested against having anything to do with this HOFFMAN. HOFFMAN complained, amongst other things, that one of my sons kicked him off the hustings. A very strange thing, that he should kick off the hustings a person whose services were so valuable!

The situation of Preston is deplorable. To so low a state has the trade come, that some, or, at least, one (one was named to me) of the manufacturers who have hitherto used power-looms, now employ hand weavers instead of the power-looms, being able to get the work done at a *lower price* in that way. Let any one judge, then, what are the wages that the poor creatures must receive who do the work now! Indeed, when I looked at the body of good and sincere men, industrious and ingenuous men, who stood before me at Preston; when I beheld the rags that covered them, unworthy of the name of clothing; when I beheld their pale and thin faces, their sunk eyes, and their anxious and miserable looks, the picture presented by my own group of men and boys at Barn Elm, rushed into my mind, I could not forbear cursing the horrible system which had reduced so many meritorious

men to such a state. The coverings of the bodies of these people of "proud Preston" (in which borough, observe, Lord Derby has a mansion) were far inferior to the coverings of many a shoy-hoy that I have seen in many of the fields in Surrey and in Hampshire. Yes, the stakes put up in the fields, twisted round with straw, and then covered over with garments to frighten away the birds, I have never seen covered with such miserable rags as the people of "proud Preston" are now covered with. There might be a couple or three thousand standing before me, and leaving out the garments of the insolent and tyrannical masters, I verily believe that the covering of the whole, with the exception of the wooden clogs upon their feet, was not worth forty shillings. I remember that my father used to buy tons of rags to chop up for manure for his hop garden. Scores of garments have I seen amongst those rags far more valuable, far better looking, than the things which covered, or in part covered, the nakedness of this shivering and ill-treated group.

The very day that we were at Preston, the Quarter Sessions was holden there; and before the Grand Jury was dismissed, and while they were in the box, a bowl of soup was brought into the court, and, after having been tasted by the Chairman, was handed round to the magistrates, and then to the Grand Jury, who appeared to have feasted upon this occasion, *à la gammelle*, as the French call it; that is to say, sitting round the mess in a circle, and handing the spoon from mouth to mouth. After the repast was over, the Chairman exhorted the Grand Jurors to encourage the making of similar messes in all their districts, in order to relieve and comfort the poor! To this art thou come at last, bragging John Bull! This is the result of having "twice-conquered France," and restored the Bourbons! This is that "indemnity for the future" which heaven-born Pitt promised as the effect of the war. What the soup was made of I cannot say; but this I know well, that any thing so horrible as this picture, so humiliating to the nation, never was heard of before. I wish that the poor people to whom this soup is tendered, could come in a body of fifty thousand,

and see the tax-eaters rolling in Hyde Park or going to a levée. They would then at once see cause and effect.

In my harangue at Preston, I did not forget the conduct of the aristocratic Catholics of that place and neighbourhood; and described their incomparable baseness in strutting at the heels of Stanley and Wood, dressed out in red ribbons, with their priests at their head, and proudly marching in the costume of their ingratitude. Those Catholics, with whom I conversed, lamented rather than rejoiced at what is called their "emancipation": they said, and truly said, that it had done nothing, and would do nothing for them, except expose them still more to the tyranny of their obdurate masters. They seem to understand the thing perfectly well. They have not been disfranchised, as the Irish have been; but they see that emancipation, as it is called, without a reform of the House of Commons, can only tend to add to the numbers of the tax-eaters. In conclusion, with regard to Preston, it would be ungrateful in me not to notice the handsome conduct of the printer of the "*Preston Chronicle*," a paper which reflects great honour on the talents as well as on the integrity of that gentleman.

I had appointed to be at the town of Rochdale by six o'clock; and I had thirty miles to go. The day being snowy and windy in the extreme. I went through Blackburne and Haslingdon, changing horses at each of those places. I did not stop at Blackburne; but it is sufficient merely to ride along to be convinced that the misery is even greater than it is described to be. A regiment of soldiers has been stationed there for a considerable time; and the part of the working people who are best clad, are clad in the cast-off garments of the soldiers. They have seldom a hat worthy of being called a hat, and no small part of their heads are covered with the cast-off caps of the standing army; several of whom I saw in the streets, rosy and gay as rectors and vicars with good fat livings. How precisely this picture corresponds with that which **FORTESQUE** has left us of the situation of the miserable French in his day! And, is it thus that we are always to remain? Are we *always*, in future, to

form, with regard to the French, exactly the reverse of that contrast which was exhibited in the days of our forefathers? Before we got to Haslingdon, it was nearly dark; and thence to Rochdale the road was both hilly and rough. It snowed and blew very much, and the night was dark. We got in, however, and were safely deposited at the "*Wellington Hotel*," by half-after six o'clock. There were plenty of gentlemen to receive us, and the inn was the nicest and most comfortable that I have seen since I left London. Here, as elsewhere, all the trouble was taken off our hands; the theatre was prepared in a very nice manner; and the house was full, boxes, pit, and gallery. We had no trouble of any sort. We had one room above stairs, and one below; in one or the other of which, every one, who chose it, had access to me; and a nicer place, kinder or more sensible people, treatment more friendly or cordial, I never met with in the whole course of my life. Of this immense parish, the benefice belongs to that Parson HAY, who received it as a gift from the Archbishop of Canterbury, some time after the horrible affair at Manchester in the year 1815. This living is said to be worth from two to three thousand pounds a year, and this Hay has another living in Yorkshire. From Rochdale, we proceeded to Todmorden (where we now are) on Friday morning; and, in the evening, I gave a lecture in the *Unitarian Chapel*, being, myself, stationed in the pulpit. I must not scold the Unitarians any more. I cannot be of their religion; but, every where, I have found them perfectly ready to tolerate every other sect; and to laugh at my innumerable attacks upon their own. I wish, of course, that they were church people; but I cordially thank them for the use of their chapels, and particularly for their friendship.

Here, at Todmorden, we are at the house, or, rather, houses of friends; friends whom we never knew before, but who had the kindness to bespeak us at Manchester. I never was induced to go into a factory, in England, before; but here is one for weaving by power-looms, belonging to the Messrs. Fielding, consisting of *one room* on a ground-

floor, which is of the surprising dimensions of a hundred and eighty feet square ; and covering a statute acre of ground all but *twenty-eight rods* ! In this room, which is lighted from above, and in the most convenient and beautiful manner, there were five hundred pair of looms at work, and five hundred persons attending those looms ; and, owing to the goodness of the masters, the whole looking healthy and well-dressed. Were I to attempt to describe our treatment here, I should do one of two things, neither of which I wish to do : fall very far short of what justice and gratitude would demand, or give offence to the really modest characters of the parties. On Saturday the 16th, I went to Halifax. I should have observed before, that the boundary-line of the two counties, cuts this romantic and beautiful place asunder. The parish church of Todmorden stands in Yorkshire ; and I stepped my foot into Yorkshire for the first time, when I went into the Unitarian Chapel. Halifax stands at twelve miles distance from this place. Thither I went yesterday, arriving there about the middle of the day, and accompanied by one of our kind friends from Todmorden. Upon our arrival, great complaints of want of due notice : great despair, amongst our friends, of an audience, for want of such notice, especially as Halifax, they said, was such an aristocratical place. I besought them not to despair; when the time came, the very beautiful little theatre was filled chock-full, gallery, pit, boxes, and all ; a finer audience, more opulent in appearance, better pleased, and, above all things, more attentive, I have not met with. Towards the conclusion of my harangue, I noticed what I heard about the aristocratical spirit of the town, and ridiculed, with all my power, the silly vanity of men in the middle rank of life, who expected that they, by separating themselves from the lower class, by affecting to belong to the aristocracy, could possibly accomplish any thing but the ruin of their own fortunes, and making themselves more the tools of those who fill the seats.

I must here make my public acknowledgments to Mr. MANLY, who is lessee of this theatre, as well as of that at Derby, and who has behaved in a manner so

exceedingly good in this case, that it would be injustice in the extreme for me to withhold the acknowledgment. Mr. MANLY is an Irishman, and his generous and bold conduct has served to wipe away a large part of the ingratitude which I have experienced at the hands of some of his countrymen.

It was eight o'clock when we went to the theatre, and the audience had the patience to listen to me until nearly eleven. Then we had to return to the inn. There is no parting, in such a case, without a great deal of delay. Every one wants to see me, and to shake me by the hand ; and here I must observe that I was particularly delighted with a very fine young man, very well dressed, and about seventeen years of age, who squeezed himself through a crowd in the lower room to get up to me, to shake hands with me, and, while he had hold of my hand, he said "I am coom'd a purpose to tak houd of the *fingers and the thumb that wrote the Advice to Young Men.*" Something resembling this I have, since I have been from home, met with in hundreds of instances. If this be not fame, what is fame ? If this be not honour, what is honour ? And if this be not happiness, what man is ever to expect to be happy ?

We did not get from Halifax until past twelve o'clock, and we got back to Todmorden about *three* this morning ; and I was not up and dressed until ten. Pretty work for a man accustomed to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and go to bed at eight. However, the rigid adherence to the milk and water renders these irregularities of little consequence. At my outset, it was thought necessary to have a glass of wine and water at the end of the harangue, in order to revive, or to do something or another ; but I soon found it to be mischievous, rather than beneficial ; I found milk and water just as restoring as the wine and water : I go to sleep the moment I am in the bed, and I rise with my head as clear and sound as a bell : and I join the women in saying to all my male readers, if you approve of my writings in other respects, if you think me right in all other things ; if you admire my exertions and listen to my precepts, I beseech you, in this re-

spect above all others, to follow my example.

This part of England is the most interesting that I ever saw. I thought that nature was in her most sportive mood when she formed the hills and dells at Hockley and Selburne, and Thursley and Hascomb ; when she formed the Devil's Punch Bowl, on the side of Hindhead, and the Devil's Jumps on the north side of that immense hill. I had admired her works in the South Downs, from which I had seen the clouds moving about in the valleys below, while others came out from the sides of the hills, like the smoke from a pipe, and went directly and shed rain upon the valleys, as I once saw them do near Petersfield, and got finely wet through while sitting on my horse and indulging in my philosophy. But it is here where nature has been sportive, indeed. Here are never-ending chains of hillocks ; hill after hill, and hill upon hill, the deep valleys winding about in every direction, and every valley having river or run of water, greater or less. By the side of the river or rivulet, where it is of any considerable size, which is the case here, there is a *canal*. The water is made use of for all the various purposes of machinery ; for the conveyance of goods of all sorts ; so that you see no such thing as a team of horses or a wagon ; and the land being a bed of stone, one bed of solid stone, with a little slight covering of earth upon it ; and there being not the slightest appearance of corn fields, barns, or ricks ; not the slightest appearance of cattle being kept ; I having seen, with my own eyes, more corn collected together, and more sheep folded on one single farm in Wiltshire, than I have seen, put all together, in all the miles and miles that I have ridden in Lancashire and Yorkshire ; this being the case, one would naturally wonder whence the food came to sustain this immense population. But reflection teaches us, that this judicious application of the coal, the water, and the stone, creates things, in exchange for which the food and drink come and will come. Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and, indeed, all the rich agricultural parts of the country, not forgetting Ireland, send hither a part of their produce in ex-

change for the goods made in that very factory that I have above mentioned. Nay, Barn-Elm Farm itself will supply several of these towns with mangel wurzel seed to plant plots of ground for the raising of milk, which is the only farm produce, in this part of the country, worth naming.

From this place to Halifax, you go nearly all the way upon a road which runs parallel with the canal ; and there are mills and houses almost the whole of the way. Every now and then a cross valley comes twisting down into this main valley ; the view is never the same, riding in a post-chaise, for two minutes at a time. From foot of hill to foot of hill, the main valley is not, on an average, more than from two to four hundred yards wide ; and the hills rise up almost perpendicular. Sometimes they are covered with trees, of puny size, to be sure ; sometimes with rough grass ; but in height, width, form, and every other circumstance, the variety is endless. The buildings, whether for manufactures or for dwelling, are all of solid stone, executed in the best possible manner. The window frames and door frames are generally of stone. The floors of passages to houses are of stone. The field fences are of stone walls ; and the gate posts and stiles are made of stone. When I came to the North before, I used to call the country, on this side of Warwickshire, the *iron country*. Every thing appears strong and hard and made to last for ever. At Rochdale, this very interesting scenery began. That town is nice and clean and solid ; and it is very curious, that all along there and through this place and to Halifax, I have seen no miserable, squalid wretches. It appears to me, that there are more rags in Preston, more wretched persons in one single street, than are to be found amongst all this immense population from Rochdale to Halifax, both those towns included. I have not seen a single ragged person in Todmorden, nor in any of the villages all the way along this most interesting valley. I am sitting at a window, and this is Sunday. Hundreds of the working people have passed by this window this day, and it is a very long time since I have seen working people so well-dressed as they are here. Probably it is partly owing to the uncrowded state of the people ; to their being scattered in so long a line as this valley consists of : there may be, and there must be, less immorality than in places like Blackburn and Preston, where there is such an immense mass in so small a circle ; but something must also be owing to the conduct of the employers, to their conduct towards their people, and to their own excellent example.

To-morrow, the 18th, I go to Huddersfield, taking a really reluctant farewell of the sensible and kind friends which we shall leave here. On the 19th, I go to Dewsbury; on the 20th, to Leeds; from Leeds I intend to go on the 23d to Barnsley; to be on the 24th at Sheffield, and to be at Nottingham by the 26th or 27th. From Nottingham I intend to go to Leicester or to Derby, I am not sure which; thence to Birmingham; and thence to Wolverhampton.

Wm. COBBETT.

P. S. I forgot to observe, that the weather has been pretty nearly constant freezing ever since I left London, which is now exactly a calendar month, I having left it on the eighteenth of December. The snow is not very deep, though it has frequently snowed; and, as to the suffering occasioned by the cold, it is experienced in this country only where there is not a sufficiency of clothing or of bedding. Almost the whole of the people are employed within doors, and there can be no want of warmth when the brightest and most beautiful of coals cost only about four-pence the hundred weight. But, from want of a sufficiency of clothing, and a sufficiency of bedding, the suffering of the working classes, particularly of the hand-loom weavers, is very great indeed. The day before I arrived at Preston, there had been the *beginning* of a visitation of the poor, and the visitors had found upwards of 500 families destitute of even a blanket. It must be nearly the same at Bolton and Blackburne, and many other places; and even here the hand-loom weavers, who live about in detached hamlets upon or amongst the hills, are, on account of the very low wages, in an extremely destitute state. It is truly lamentable to behold so many thousands of men who formerly earned from twenty to thirty shillings a week, now compelled to live upon five, four, or even less. The miserable potatoes are cheap, to be sure, but even of those, they have not a sufficiency. It is the more sorrowful to behold these men in this state, as they still retain the frank and bold character formed in the days of their independence.

It is very curious that not only the solid provisions, these miserable potatoes, are, for the far greater part, brought from a distance; but, even at Rochdale, which is about a dozen miles to the north of Manchester, there are scarcely any leguminous articles; that is to say, *garden-stuff*, which do not come through Manchester from Cheshire! The conveyance is by the canal, and it is truly surprising that this immense population should be supplied with all these things without the smallest appearance of bustle or effort. You see market-carts in Manchester and other towns; and now and then a cart upon the road, plenty of carts and wagons in the towns carrying bales of cotton about, and bales of goods: lifting the things from factory to factory, or from store-house to store-house; but, on the high-road, at any distance from a town, I have not seen any thing of this sort since I entered Lancashire; and as to what we, in the south, call a team of horses, I have

seen no such thing to the north of the town of Derby. Of birds, I have not seen but one single chaffinch since I came out of Derbyshire. No rooks in the fields, or flying about; not a blackbird or a thrush; and I see no house-sparrows; just about ten thousand of which are every day to be seen in my farm-yard at Barn-Elm. I suppose that these feathered gentry, who travel very quickly, do just as they do in America; that is to say, get off to the south in the winter, and come back again in the summer. The nightingale, I believe, has never been seen or heard to the north of Staffordshire; so that those persons who delight in birds, have, in the south, some compensation for the loss of the coals and the water. In the winter of 1828, the thrush, the blackbird, the bullfinch, and some other birds, sang at Barn-Elm all the winter long almost every morning. But that is a very rare spot, and, from inquiries that I have made of several persons, we have the nightingale every year three weeks earlier than they have her in Hampshire and Sussex.

LINCOLN COUNTY MEETING.

I AM about to insert the petition agreed on at this famous County Meeting, and also the speeches that were made. These things form an epoch in the history of this terrible system of debt and taxation. Great praise is due to all the gentlemen who took part in these proceedings; but particularly to COL. JOHNSON, by whom the petition was drawn up and moved; and on whose sincerity the country may rely, having a guarantee in his long-continued excellent conduct as a member of Parliament. I was afraid that the landowners had in view that which Mr. WESTERN had in view in 1822; namely, to drive back the Government to the base paper-money. It appears that the gentlemen in Lincolnshire are in earnest to obtain a reduction of the taxes, which is the only real cure for the disorders of the country. Everywhere where I have been, I have endeavoured to root out of the minds of the manufacturers, particularly the labouring part of them, the stupid notion that the distress arises either from Corn-bills, or from the greediness of their own masters. They have, laid before them, the true causes, namely, double taxes; double salaries; double pay; double interest of debt; effected by a doubling of the value of money. I have brushed away all the rubbishy causes assigned by the Ministers at various times; I have exposed the folly of surplus population, and all the follies of Malthus

and Wilmot Horton. With these I have made clean work as I have gone. To prove to my hearers the monstrous error, that the Corn Bill cannot produce distress like this, I have only had to remind them, that they have had several spells of prosperity since the year 1815; and that the Corn Bill has been in existence from that day to this. I have asked them, at the same time, whether it could have been the Corn Bill that had reduced to the state of beggary, farmers and labourers of Lincolnshire and Kent. It has given me infinite pleasure to observe, during these representations of mine, masters as well as workmen, turning their heads and looking at each other, as much as to say, "How we have been deceived!" I have nowhere blinked any question; I have nowhere fostered delusion; I have nowhere endeavoured to obtain popularity by flattering the prejudices and errors of my hearers; but have everywhere maintained doctrines directly opposed to those prejudices and errors; and not one single mark of disapprobation have I received since I left London. The people of the North, whose frankness and quick-sightedness, and warm heartedness, have, ever since I first knew them, been subjects of admiration with me, such men need not to be flattered.

If the manufacturers and their men now cordially join the landowners, and farmers, and labourers: if the makers of the clothes join with the rearers of the food, we shall now see relief and renovation without confusion. All the manufacturers ought to copy the petition of the county of Lincoln, and send their petitions up to Parliament signed by hundreds and thousands of men. If they do this, we are all relieved, and the country is saved: if they do not, no one can tell what is to be the result, but who is to imagine that there will not be turmoil without end, and final convulsion?

Amongst other rubbish that I have thought it necessary to sweep away in my course, I began at Halifax (I had forgotten it before) to brush away the rubbish relative to a remedy from *free trade to India*. I assured my hearers that Manchester goods are selling at Calcutta *cheaper than at Manchester*; that every one who had made a shipment to India for years past, had *lost* a great deal by that shipment; that there was already perfectly free trade to India; that any man might send a ship to India, and send in her whatsoever goods he pleased; that, as to want of permission to prowl about the country with goods, I

asked them whether they wanted any such permission after landing our goods at New York or Philadelphia. I put this question: If the goods are wanted in the interior of the country, would there not be found persons to carry them into the interior for sale, when it would be the manifest interest of the East India Company that such traffic should be carried on to the greatest possible extent? When I put these questions my hearers looked at one another, as if they were whispering "How we have been humbugged!" I find that nine out of ten of the people hitherto believed that nobody but the East India Company could send goods to India; and that, therefore, to *open* that trade, as it is called, would cause a great outlet to English manufactures, and effectually relieve all this distress. I asked my hearers at Halifax, whether they could possibly believe, that the want of a free trade to India, as it is called, had been the cause of plunging into distress and ruin the farmers of Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Kent and Sussex.

I repeat, that if the manufacturers be wise and spirited, they will, unless they wish to be totally ruined, send up short petitions, in substance similar to that of Lincolnshire; that is to say, praying for a repeal of the malt and the beer taxes: then they will be listened to; but, on the silly stuff about corn bills, free trade to India; stuff about spinners and weavers, calculated only to set one class of the community against the other, and to enable the tax-eaters to fatten upon both, if they pursue this path of crookedness and of folly, let them look forward to an addition to their sufferings.

LINCOLN COUNTY MEETING.

SOME few weeks ago a requisition, most respectably signed by the freeholders of the county of Lincoln, was presented to Richard Thorold, Esq., the High Sheriff of the county, requesting him to convene a public meeting of the inhabitants, in order that they might have an opportunity of petitioning Parliament respecting the duties imposed upon malt and beer. The High Sheriff, as most of our readers remember, declined calling any meeting of the county, on the ground that any such petition was calculated to embarrass his Majesty's Government in the course it proposed to pursue in the next Session of Parliament. This refusal being signified to the requisitionists, some of the more active of them being magistrates, called a meeting of the county by the following notice:—

"To the Sheriff of Lincolnshire.—We, the undersigned, request that you will convene a County Meeting, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning the Legislature on the subject of the Malt and Beer Duties:—Richard Sutton, Chas. Anderson, Robert Heron, Wm. Hutton, W. A. Johnson, Chas. Allix, Fred. Peel, Edw. Wright, Russel Callet, J. H. Thorold, Richard Eunsom, Richard Ellis, W. J. Cholmeley, H. W. Sibthorpe, Andrew Balfour, John Buntt, John Bratton, John

Brown, J. Coullass, Samuel Slater, J. L. Miller, J. G. Stevenson, T. Luard, Richard Healy, Wm. Shield, Charles Reesby, S. E. Hopkinson, B. Broomhead, W.E. Welby, Robert Croft, Bacon Hickman, Henry Handley, Benj. Handley, James L. Nixon, Lewis Watson, G. F. Heneage, C. D. W. Sibthorpe, J. C. L. Calcraft, Wm. Musson, John Hardy, Wm. Robinson, W. Dolby, Thos. Lowry, Jos. Roberts, J. C. Beasley, R. Duckle, W. Brightmore, G. Parnel, W. Mercer, John Garfite, James Cross, and Thos. Duckle.

"And the Sheriff having thought proper to refuse to call a County Meeting, we the undersigned Magistrates of this County, do hereby convene a Meeting to be held at the Castle Hill, Lincoln, at Twelve o'clock precisely, on Friday, the 8th day of January, 1830, in conformity with the above Requisition : Robert Heron, Frederick Peel, Charles Allix, Henry Handley."

In consequence of this notice, a meeting was held on that day in the Castle-yard, in the city of Lincoln. The High Sheriff, though he refused to take any part in the meeting, offered the requisitionists the use of either the Castle-yard or the Session-house; the latter being thought too small to accommodate the number expected to attend the meeting, a scaffold on waggons was erected in the Castle-yard, and on this spot the meeting took place.

The meeting has, we believe, excited considerable attention in the county, but, owing to the unfavourable state of the weather, it was not so numerously attended as was anticipated. At half-after twelve, when the meeting commenced, there were about 800 persons present; but this number subsequently increased to nearly 2,000. On the Committee, &c., coming upon the hustings, we observed among the Gentlemen present, Sir R. Heron, Sir W. Ingleby, Sir E. F. Broomhead, Colonel Sibthorpe, M.P., Colonel Johnson, Mr. Handley, Mr. Chaplin, M.P., &c.

Mr. Handley was unanimously called upon to take the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN then addressed the meeting. He said that under any other circumstances, he should probably have shrunk from the task imposed upon him, but from the peculiar nature of the case, he did not feel warranted in doing so, nor would he, after the extraordinary conduct of the High Sheriff, say that he was unfit to represent an office which that gentleman had deserted. (Hear, hear.) It was unnecessary for him to tell the meeting, that the High Sheriff had, in the exercise of his privilege rather than that of his courtesy, refused to comply with a requisition most numerously signed, and a more respectable one had never been presented from that or any other county. (Hear, hear.) Not agreeing with the arguments which that gentleman had just put forth, relative to the embarrassments such a meeting would impose upon the Ministers, he (the Chairman) was one of four who had signed the requisition, in conformity with which they were there assembled. Having said thus much, he would not detain them longer from the more important business of the day, than to request them to hear with attention

any one who might offer himself to their notice. If things were stated which they did not wish to hear, they must be opposed by argument, and not by clamour, by which they would give that tone and character to the meeting which could not fail to impress on the country, the Parliament, and the Ministers, that the county of Lincoln had a right to be heard. He would not detain them further that cold day from the business of the meeting, and he trusted that every speaker would confine himself to that business, in order to prevent the introduction of any unnecessary matter. (Hear.)

Sir R. HERON thought that there could be but one opinion on the point of the Sheriff's thinking proper to give a flat denial to a requisition the most numerous and (after the withdrawal of his own name) the most respectable that had ever been presented on any subject to any sheriff. On what ground could he have refused? Was it on the strength of his own opinions? He (Sir Robert) hoped by this time that he had repented of such presumption. Was it by the advice of others? He (Sir Robert) would tell him that all he could have called to his counsel ought not to have had a tenth part of the weight of such a requisition as that presented to him. (Applause.) He trusted that the meeting would receive the High Sheriff's conduct with the indignation that was due to it (applause); for, had they tamely submitted to his arbitrary decision, an example would be set, by which the people of England might hereafter be deprived of their dearest rights; those of assembling for the consideration of their grievances, and of petitioning Parliament. There were persons who thought (and from the answer of the Sheriff he supposed that that gentleman was one of the number) that the meeting ought to have been called for the purpose of considering the general distress of the nation, but could any one in his senses be of such an opinion? Was not the subject before them large enough? (Hear, hear.) What ridicule would not have been thrown upon the meeting, what clamour would not have been made, if they had attempted to set themselves up as a sort of Lincoln Convention, for the purpose of superseding the duties of the British Parliament; or if they had attempted to regulate without books, papers, or documents, the affairs of the navy, the army, and the country, in the course of four hours; a thing which the Parliament, with all its advantages, found it difficult enough to perform in the course of four Sessions? Under these circumstances, he intended to move the resolution which he held in his hand, and he trusted that it would be generally confirmed by the meeting. It would, however, be necessary for him before concluding, to say a few words on the important subject on which they were assembled; but he could assure them that he would endeavour to be as concise as possible. The object for which they had met was one of the most important topics that had ever attracted the attention of the county of Lincoln. It would not, however, be necessary for him to trouble them with details respecting the tax on malt and beer; suffice it to say, that the

duty imposed on them amounted to within a fraction of 50s., or, in other words, that there was a tax of nearly 150 per cent. on the raw commodity. (Hear, hear.) This was what might be called a pretty severe tax on the agriculture of the country; but fortunately, it did not fall upon the agriculturists alone; all classes of the community concurred in opposing the tax; so that it could not now be thrown into the teeth of the landlords and farmers that they were petitioning only for themselves, and did not care what became of the rest of the people. The labourers in agriculture and manufactures were equally oppressed, and even those who were able to make the enormous sacrifice that was necessary to procure a wholesome beverage, were again checked and unable to do it on account of the miserable monopoly of the licensing system. What was the consequence of this? That they were driven to the use of ardent spirits, to the ruin of their industry, the degradation of their morals, and the destruction of their health. (Cheers.) It had been his fortune to spend a great part of his early life in Kent, at a time when the trade of smuggling was scarcely checked, and the consequence was, that the lower classes of the county universally resorted to that pernicious liquor called gin. And what was the result? Why, that there was scarcely a man who was able to do a good day's work in the whole county; to which he might add, that his father's house was every night surrounded by thieves, on the look-out for any thing that might have been left unguarded or exposed to their depredations. Such were the blessings derived from the use of ardent spirits. (Hear.) He should perform his promise of being as concise as possible; but he must entreat them, on an occasion so important as the present, not to give way to any sort of exaggeration. Men were not always aware of the mischief that arose from painting a picture too highly, or representing things as they were not really. He remembered an instance of this, which took place in that very Castle-yard, on the occasion of a public meeting being held respecting the Corn Laws. One of the persons present on that occasion stated that in the opposite port, on the Continent, there was sufficient corn to supply the consumption of the country for seven years. Had he stated seven days, instead of seven years, he (Sir Robert) thought he would have exceeded the fact. But what was the consequence? Instead of the statement being treated with the ridicule it deserved, it went the round of the public papers; was bandied backward and forward on both sides of the House of Commons; and, in more ways than one, did incalculable mischief to the cause (Hear, hear); and he was sure that he had a right to complain of it, for he was set down as the author of the assertion. In connexion with the repeal of the malt duties, a most important question was sometimes asked, How the tax was to be replaced? He was not the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and unless they were shortly to have a better Chancellor of the Exchequer than those feeble men who, of late years, had exercised, or

rather left unexercised, the important functions of that office, the country was not likely to be much better off. (Hear, hear.) But he did not pretend to say that the tax would be repealed; it was true that pamphlets had been published for the purpose of endeavouring to show that the additional consumption would be the means of restoring the amount of the tax; but his object was to petition that all the taxes should be done away with (Bravo, and a laugh); he meant all the taxes on malt and beer. In his opinion, the increased consumption would do nothing towards keeping the tax at its present produce; for supposing half the tax should be repealed, what was gained by the additional consumption might add to the amount of malt duties, but it would as certainly be absorbed by the deficiency in the amount of duties on ardent spirits. (Hear, hear.) But he would say at once that he did not wish that the tax should be replaced, because he knew that by a long, decided, and radical economy, by a new organization and diminution of the army, by a reduction of its pay and pensions, every deficiency in the taxes might be supplied. (Cheers.) A great deal of talk was made about the necessity of keeping the national faith with the public creditor; but in his opinion the doing so would be the breaking that faith with the grossest injustice towards all the rest of the community. He did not mean to say that the Government ought to be blamed for the alteration in the circulating medium, or for reducing that which was once exclusively British circulation to the circulation of all Europe; he believed that in time of peace such a course was necessary; but he objected to their now paying the interest of what was borrowed at a depreciated currency in the advanced currency of the present time. (Hear, hear.) Those who were calling out loudest respecting the national faith with the public creditor, knew that it could not be done; they knew that in the very first year of a war, the whole system must be put an end to. His object was to anticipate that time, to prevent its running to the last, and to put an end to a system which carried with it the destruction of thousands, and the ruin of millions. He trusted, therefore, that the petition would meet with the unanimous approbation of the meeting. The eyes of all England were upon them, every county was waiting for the issue: Lincolnshire had for once, at least, taken the lead; and if they gave their unanimous support to the present proposition, their resolutions would be echoed through the whole of the empire, and they and the people of England must ultimately prevail. (Cheers.)

The following is the resolution which was proposed to the meeting by the Hon. Baronet in the course of his speech:—

"Resolved,—That Richard Thorold, Esq., Sheriff of this county, by refusing to convene a County Meeting, on a requisition most unanimously signed by the Gentry, Clergy, and Yeomanry, has shown an unwarrantable contempt for the wishes of the county, and has set a most dangerous example, tending to deprive the people of England of their legitimate

rights and constitutional privileges, in a manner inconsistent with the due and impartial exercise of his official duty. Resolved, that the above resolution be printed in the county papers."

Mr. SHIELD seconded the resolution. In his opinion, the county of Lincoln had acted most wisely, and had shown its independence by being the first to come forward on this important question. The question of malt, however, was not the only one that pressed so severely upon the country; for if the importation of foreign corn was permitted to go on much longer, the end of it would be that they would not have bread to eat, and then drinking would be of very little use. (Laughter and applause.)

Sir EDWARD F. BROOMHEAD was quite of opinion that a most unconstitutional example had been set on the present occasion: the right of the people of England to meet, through the proper authorities, on any subject that was not dangerous to the public peace, was indisputable. He, however, did hope, that the mover of the resolution would revise it in one part, which appeared to him to be personally offensive to the High Sheriff: the phrase that he alluded to was, that of showing "an unwarrantable contempt." For his own part, he had not seen any of it. On the contrary, the Sheriff's letter was uncommonly civil and gentlemanlike. (Cries of No, no; laughter, and hisses.) He also begged to remind the meeting of another thing, which was, that the High Sheriff had most handsomely given the County Hall and Castle-yard for them to meet in that day. (Laughter and uproar.) If Sir Robert Heron, therefore, did not wish to withdraw the words "unwarrantable contempt," which he hoped he would—(Cries of "I hope he won't," hisses.)

Sir ROBERT HERON: I can assure you that I have always considered the High Sheriff as a man of liberal principles and gentlemanlike conduct; but my personal regard for him must not and shall not interfere with the duty which I owe to the country. (Applause.) The words that I have used, I have used after due consideration; and let me add, that they are not applied in any way to his private character, but to his public conduct.

Colonel SIRTHORPE said, he had great pleasure in meeting his brother freeholders and freemen, he believed he might say, on that occasion, to discuss one of the most important questions that could ever come before the public. Till he came to the hustings, he had not seen the resolution to be proposed relative to the conduct of the Sheriff. Generally, he did not coincide in the language which had been used by the Hon. Baronet. He knew nothing of the Sheriff; nothing whatever of his private character, and meant to speak of him only as he had, in the exercise of his discretion, thought right to refuse to call a county meeting, when the requisition had been most numerously signed. He knew him only as a public man, and could not use towards him any of those expressions of forbearance or civility which the Hon. Baronet seemed to desire. He agreed completely and fully

with the Hon. Baronet who had first addressed them, and cordially concurred in the proposed resolution. It was altogether a matter of public duty; and the High Sheriff, by refusing to call the meeting, had not behaved either well or respectfully to the country.—(Bravo!) During the period that he had been in London, he had attended a meeting relative to the subject they were that day called on to petition about, and he knew that the conduct of the Sheriff in refusing to call the county of Lincoln together, had been a subject of general interest and painful regret. At the meeting which he had thought it his duty to attend, he had heard the conduct of the High Sheriff censured in the warmest manner. It had been justly said that the eyes of all England were on that meeting; and he hoped, now that they had met, that they would, by their firmness, by their determination, and by their unanimity, influence other counties to follow their example; and when the whole country took up the question, he had no doubt that it would influence Ministers to discharge their duty, which on this point they had neglected, and induce them to institute such an inquiry into the distress of the country as would lead to some measure of relief. He hoped too that they would reduce the taxation which now pressed so very heavily on the country, and bore it down to ruin, and go fully into the discussion of all the causes of distress, so that the people should have no more cause to complain of their neglect. (Hear.) He had heard with shame, and he should not deserve the respect of his fellow-countrymen, he should not deserve to exist, he should have no pleasure in any of the luxuries and comforts he enjoyed, (and he had his full share of them,) he should not deserve to be there, if he had not heard with shame, that the members, on the motion of his Hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall, refused to go into any inquiry as to the cause of the great distress of the people. He had, he was happy to say, attended in his place on that occasion, though many of the representatives of the people had neglected their duty, and had given that motion all the support in his power. He trusted and hoped that the strong expression of public opinion, beginning with that meeting, would make such a profound impression on the feelings of the whole country, that the Ministry would not be able to deny to the general voice what they had refused to some individuals. He differed from the Hon. Baronet in his opinion of the words applied to the conduct of the Sheriff, and he hoped that the meeting would unanimously agree to the resolution. (Great applause.)

Sir EDWARD FFRENCH BROOMHEAD said, as he understood the Hon. Baronet to mean nothing personal by the words he had objected to, he would not destroy the unanimity of the meeting by pressing his amendment.

The resolution was then put by the Chairman, and carried by acclamation. As was also a resolution, that this resolution be printed in the county papers.

Colonel JOHNSON was very happy to meet his fellow-freeholders, and he should have the

honour to present to them for their adoption a petition relative to the repeal of the duties on malt and beer. He meant not to trouble them at any length, but to stick close to the question. Sir Robert Heron had said that these duties were 150 per cent. on the cost of the article : he begged leave to correct that single observation ; these duties were 200 per cent. (Hear, hear.) They were duties also which operated in the most odious and oppressive manner, affecting all the poorer classes. He hoped to call things by their proper names, and he meant to do so. They all knew the words that a publican was obliged by law to write over his door—" Licensed to sell Malt Liquors." Now, the meaning of these words was very contrary to what they were supposed to imply. Besides the duties on malt and beer, there were also duties on hops ; and the meaning of these words really were—a license to collect the public revenue. If he went into a public-house and asked for a quart of beer, the landlord might be disposed to make him pay 2d. for it ; and he would be well disposed to do this, but there was, in fact, an exciseman at his elbow, who, for every 2d. he charged, made him pay 4d. to the excise. If he went to a public-house, and was made to pay 6d. for a pot of beer, he should think it a great hardship ; and he did not think it made any difference that 4d. of his went to the excise, and 2d. to the landlord. (Laughter.) The words, therefore, meant a license to collect the revenue of the excise. (Hear.) He did not exaggerate ; he had no occasion ; it was only necessary to describe the thing fairly. The duties were altogether a most hateful tax. There was also the excise duty on hops, and a man could not grow a stalk of hops for his own use, without being liable to a penalty of 20*l.* (That's true.) A man could not make his own malt in his own way ; and to get rid of these odious taxes would be a great benefit to the public. He did not advocate the abolition of them as an advantage to the landlord, but to the public generally ; and he hoped that they would receive the petition unanimously. The eyes of all England were on their decision. He knew that some of the Ministers thought light of county meetings ; but they would not, and could not, think light of the general opinion of the country, if strongly expressed and strongly enforced by its representatives, as he hoped it would be, if that meeting set the example. (Bravo, bravo!) He trusted the petition, which he would then read, would be unanimously supported. Colonel Johnson then read the following petition to the Honourable the House of Commons :—

" We, the undersigned inhabitants of the County of Lincoln, call upon your Honourable House, beseeching you earnestly, though respectfully, that you will give your undivided attention to the insupportable distress which pervades the country.

" We humbly represent that taxation, excessive as it was at the conclusion of the war, has become far more so by the change in the value of money.

" That it is incumbent on the Government

to accommodate its expenditure to this new order of things, which it has itself created.

" That the burden is now intolerable, and must be lightened.

" We, therefore, under a perfect conviction that taxes must be remitted to a great amount, beg to point out to your Honourable House the injurious nature of the taxes on malt and beer.

" That they are hostile to agriculture, and equally disadvantageous to manufacture, for they deprive us of the use of our own produce, and send millions of pounds out of the country to purchase the produce of foreign soils.

" That they deprive the people of their national beverage, forcing them to the use of noxious drugs and ardent spirits.

" That those obnoxious taxes fall principally upon the middle and labouring classes ; and that the effect is to demoralise the one and to make the other dissatisfied.

" We, your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray your Honourable House that you would be pleased to repeal forthwith those odious taxes, and grant that the trade in beer may be made free."

Major HANDLEY seconded the motion for the adoption of the petition. He was confident it would be found generally acceptable. If the petition were not good, he was sure the character of Colonel Johnson would make them receive it with favour and indulgence. (Bravo!) But he did not use the character of any man to impose on them a measure of a doubtful utility, and the petition was, he thought, so good that it might well stand on its own legs. The petition went on the great principle that taxation was excessive, and was carried beyond what the nation could bear. (True, true.) It must therefore be reduced. Under such circumstances, it would follow that all taxation, even supposing it justly and fairly levied on the whole community, and the best taxation which could be levied, must be reduced ; but the taxes they now wished to have repealed were neither just nor impartial ; they were not levied on the whole community, but on part of it, the least able to bear the burden. They fell altogether on the middle and labouring classes. To the labouring classes beer was a necessary of life ; some drink they must have ; and, as they could not get beer, they took to gin, which made them unfit to live. The Government had proved its partiality by reducing the taxes on tea and coffee, which were the luxuries of the rich, which were also the produce of a foreign land, and consuming which took away the employment from our people. Beer was the produce of our own fields, or the manufacture of our own people ; and using it gave employment to our own labourers. In looking at the causes of our distress, some people would not look straight forward, they looked to the right or the left, and would squint. (Bravo.) The only cause of all our distress was excessive taxation. It was taxation which deprived capital of profit, and labour of employment. The funds, too, that were taken from the industry of the country and carried into the Exchequer, were doled out among the idle and the luxurious. They

were extorted from the labour and sweat of the people, to be given to those who did nothing. (Bravo.) Those who were adverse to the repeal the petition proposed, if any such were present, might say that the Government could not do without these taxes, but he believed the resources of the Government could well spare them. They all knew that salaries had been raised when money was reduced in value, and that they had not since lowered. They ought to be lowered, and there was some public property which might be appropriated. This was a delicate subject, and he would not then say anything further on it, as he hoped he might soon have another opportunity. He believed that the resources of the country were ample, and he hoped to see them so administered that England should again acquire prosperity, and again deserve the name of Merry England. He hoped the time would yet come when songs might again be heard in honour of the can of nut-brown ale, now almost forgotten ; and when every cottager, surrounded by his wife and family, might be happy with them over the nut-brown beverage of his forefathers. He hoped, too, that they would be unanimous in expressing their opinions, and that next year he should be able to wish them joy that their taxes were done away, and they all in the enjoyment of good ale.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Member for the County) always felt great pleasure in meeting the freeholders, whether they were called together by the Sheriff or by any other means. He was happy to say that the obnoxious laws which impeded county meetings had been done away, and that the magistrates had the right, which they had exercised, of calling the county together. He was always happy to meet the freeholders, to hear their opinion, and boldly to express his own. Though he differed in some respects from the gentleman who had moved the petition, he did not mean to object to it, and indeed he thought the greater part of it very good. The first part of it was not, indeed, quite strong enough; for they ought to make a strong and earnest request for the reduction of taxation. He thought they ought also to call for a full inquiry into the cause of our distress. That such distress existed nobody could deny : and to no persons was it better known than to them, many of whom, he believed, found it difficult to pay the enormous poor-rates which now fell on the county. From this pressure, and other similar ones, they would obtain no relief whatever by the beer being 4d. instead of 6d. (No, no ! that won't do !) He did not mean to make any disagreeable remarks ; but it was not by clamour there or elsewhere that any measure could be carried. It must be done by argument addressed to the reason of the community. The great distress which existed could not be relieved by the repeal of one tax, he was going to say this ; and that there ought to be a great reduction of taxation to give them any sensible relief. He would not then go into the financial questions connected with the subject, but he would make one or two remarks. They were suffering partly from the introduction of foreign coarse wool ; and it was impossible for

the farmer to thrive if the home market were supplied by foreign growths, at half the price they could sell wool for. While Ministers were allowing the productions of foreign countries to be brought into this country, every nation on the Continent was prohibiting the introduction of our commodities. He agreed to the petition, as far as it went to ask for a reduction of taxation : but he did not think that would relieve the distress, unless they also obtained protection for their own industry. The meeting must be aware that it called on the Government to abolish taxation to the amount of seven millions ; and to meet this, there must be a great reduction of expenditure. To make this, both Houses of Parliament ought to be petitioned to institute a full investigation into the circumstances of the nation. He agreed fully with the petition, except that he thought the prayer of it too confined.—(Bravo.)

Mr. A. CALCRAFT was perfectly satisfied with the petition, and he hoped they would also petition against free trade. Free trade only deprived the British labourers of employment to give it to foreigners. It disabled the farmer to find employment for the labourer, and give him adequate wages. Our people must have employment before they could be prosperous. Employment and prosperity went together, and he hoped, therefore, that they would ask for that protection for their industry which was now more than ever necessary.

Colonel SIBTHORPE had before said a few words to them relative to the conduct of the Sheriff, and he would then, with permission, say a few words on the subject of the petition, and glad was he to find it brought under discussion. He coincided with his Hon. Friend (Sir R. HERON), that it would not be well to take up their time by entering into the wide field of the general distress, or to enumerate all the causes, and perhaps they were innumerable, which had led to the present state of suffering. He agreed with his Honourable Friend, (the Member for the county,) that a great deal of it was to be attributed to the shameful encouragement given to the consumption of articles of foreign growth. He had lately thought it his duty to perambulate the City of London, and, to his great regret, he had noticed that the shops were filled with foreign articles of the most trumpery description, all fancy and finery, and of no real value. (Hear, hear.) He had been into a glass shop, and the honest man he found there would rather have sold English than foreign goods ; but he said nobody would buy the English, and he was obliged to keep French. At the same time when he attempted to send even a pair of decanters to France, they were seized as soon as they were landed. It was with glass and other things as with ladies' bonnets, unless they were of a peculiar kind, and got at a particular place, the person who used them was considered to be nobody. (Hear, hear, and a laugh.) Not to be nobody, people went to Paris, or bought foreign goods, instead of staying at home and consuming the produce of their own country. He liked to live in his own country, and in his own city, and to

spend his property in his own neighbourhood. He was some time ago passing down Regent-street, and he could hardly get along by the conflux of carriages which were putting down persons at two shops, that contained nothing but some new fashions imported from Paris, or from some other foreign place. For things of that kind people had to pay tenfold their value ; and after they had bought them they were of no use. He rejoiced that they had come there to petition against the taxes on malt and beer, which were heavy, partial, and oppressive ; affecting the labouring classes chiefly, whom they compelled to have recourse to the obnoxious liquor gin. He had bought a bottle of this, and not having the power, like the Fire-King, of resisting poisons, he had been quite satisfied with the smell. He understood that three gin-shops, in the neighbourhood of Covent-garden, sold 400 gallons of gin per month, or about 1,300 glasses each day ; and he had heard of one house that had sold 350 glasses before breakfast. Porter, as at present made, was half composed of semi-pepper, quassia, liquorice, *cocculus Indicus*, and *nux vomica*. If it were examined it could not be sold, and it was principally intended to give employment to informers. He had a great respect for the law, but it was impossible to approve of a law, from the punishment of which an honest man could not escape. They had often before met, and he hoped they would often again meet, to express their sentiments fearlessly and boldly, and convince the Government that they had both the power and the will to resist oppression. He hoped speedily again to meet the county, and hear the people give instructions to their representatives to promote an inquiry into the causes of our distress, and endeavour to remove it. He would not then, as the day was so very cold, trespass longer on their patience, as he should probably speak more at length when he got with them into warmer quarters, and when he and they had something better in their stomachs than the cold air.—(Applause.)

Sir E. FFRENCH BROOMHEAD was of opinion that the price of beer was much too high. He was also of opinion, that the Government had acted unwisely and unfairly. It had reduced the duties on rum, on brandy, on wine, and on every thing except beer. Either the duties ought to have been left on the other articles, or the duties on beer ought to have been reduced. The consequence was, that respectable people had been driven to drink drams, who would formerly have been ashamed of it. He would be the last man to object to the comforts of the people ; he did not, like some people, look on beer drinking as a crime, but he was averse to gin drinking from its ruinous consequences. The labourers of England worked better than those of some other countries, only because they were better fed ; they were formerly used to have meat and beer ; in harvest time they now had both, and then they probably did more work than any other people. Farmers' servants who were well fed, worked well, as they all knew, and he should like to see the time come when our labourers again got plenty of meat and beer. (Bingo.)

He should be glad to see the taxes on beer done away, and instead of gin, that the people should drink good ale ; but unless the public-house monopoly was at the same time done away, he did not think they would gain much. This monopoly levied a tax of three millions on the people, without contributing one farthing to the revenue. In fact, it diminished the revenue, by diminishing consumption. The Government violated the most approved principles of taxation in taxing hops, and that tax also ought to be done away. So far he believed that what he had said was consistent with the views of the other gentlemen present, and he thanked the meeting for the attention it had paid him ; but what he had yet to say he was afraid might not be so well received. Something had been said about public property. He hoped that nothing was meant to be undertaken against the tundholder, and against the property of the church. (Voices in the crowd, "Against both !") Major Handley explained that his observations had applied to the Crown Lands.

Sir E. F. BROOMHEAD : There was a great deal of exaggeration with respect to them. They were already included in the sources of public revenue ; and did not, he believed, produce more than 200,000*l.* a-year. (Take the parson's property.) He was afraid, if they demanded the abolition of too many taxes on articles of consumption, that the Government would be obliged to have recourse to an income tax ; and he did not want any such thing, and he hoped none such would be adopted. He was an enemy also to free trade, unless it were all free ; and while the farmer was called on to submit to a free trade in wool and in corn, he was not allowed to have a free trade in bank-notes. The people were not allowed to have free trade in public-houses, nor free trade in game, nor free trade to India, nor free trade to China, nor free trade in any thing but in the produce of their bitterest enemies. The country did not want the long coarse wool of foreigners, but with it the trade was free to the injury of the farmer. He wanted to see trade universally free, or else protection afforded to the British farmer. They would best show the moderation of their proceedings by disclaiming any intention of meddling with property ; and to express his own views, he had drawn up an amendment, which he hoped Colonel Johnson would allow to form part of the petition. Sir Edward then read the following amendment :—

" Your petitioners at the same time distinctly disavow any intention to urge the adoption of measures which may endanger the public credit, or the honour and safety of the kingdom, and they especially deprecate any financial measures or arrangements which may lead to the imposition of an Income Tax in time of peace."

[The meeting, on hearing the amendment read, called out loudly, " No, no."]

Mr. WRIGHT, of Brattelby, seconded the amendment.

Colonel JOHNSON opposed it. He did not want an Income Tax : he wanted the Government expenditure reduced, and if the Chancell-

lor of the Exchequer could not reduce it, let the Ministers put him in that Right Hon. Gentleman's place, and he would reduce it twenty millions. As for public property, he wanted to have a slap at all public properties; and after that he would compromise with the public creditor on the best terms he could, but so that every person should bear his fair share of the public burdens. He wanted to see the energies of England relieved from the pressure on them, so that she might not silently suffer the aggrandisement of other Powers. He should oppose the amendment; and he hoped they would now unanimously petition against the duties on malt and beer; he hoped, too, that they would succeed in getting them taken off; and that next year he should meet them to petition for the abolition of some other taxes. (Bravo, bravo.)

Sir WILLIAM INGLEBY, the other county Member, then offered himself to the notice of the meeting, and was received with some marks of approbation. He was glad to meet the county on any terms, but he thought it not very liberal in the Sheriff to refuse to call a county meeting. It was not perhaps a regular county meeting, in the absence of the Sheriff; but he felt much gratitude to the magistrates who had signed the requisition for the meeting, and under whose guidance they had assembled. He had been sorry to hear, on a recent occasion, when he had met a body of his constituents at Grantham, that they were in so bad a state: and since that time, he had busied himself in finding out some plan to give them relief. He had drawn up something which he should probably submit to the meeting, if he were not afraid of interfering with the results of that day's proceedings; and if that were the case, he should propose it at some other and more suitable opportunity. What they wanted was, a great reduction of taxation, which at present was enormous in its amount. If they could get the malt and beer duties taken off, that would be one step, one point gained, and they might afterwards gain another. He hoped he should meet the county at some future time to submit his propositions to the freeholders. The distress in Lincolnshire was very great, but it was not so great as in those parts of the kingdom where manufactures were established; and he had lately been residing in one of these, where he knew that the people were almost starving at his own door. Even in Lincoln, the distress was greater than he was aware of; till he had met some of the agriculturists at Grantham, a few days before, he could not know it to be so great as he had found it to be without attempting something for their relief. As to what had been said about the Government not reducing the taxes, and not touching public property, he knew that the taxes had for some time past been paid out of the capital of the farmer. If not taken out of the capital of the farmer, he was sure that they could not come out of their profits, and he did not know why they should be ruined to enrich the tax-gatherer and the fundholder. If the country was in such a bad state that its resources were no longer equal to its wants, the Government was bound to reduce

its expenditure, to lay its taxes on equally, and allow all to go down together, not to ruin only one class. The people ought to come forward, and he hoped that they would, to expostulate with Parliament when it was opened, in order to obtain a reduction of expenditure. Nothing but that could give us any great relief; and to show that he was in earnest, he had drawn up such a petition as he thought ought to be sent to Parliament. He had taken considerable pains with it; but he did not think that he should propose it for their consideration at that time. (Let us have it; give it us now, and a general call of the meeting for the Hon. Baronet to read the petition.) He accordingly read it as follows—

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled,

"The Humble Petition of the People of the County of Lincoln,

"SIR HOWEWT.—That your petitioners are plunged into distress absolutely intolerable: that in a county so highly favoured by nature, all the proofs of decline, decay, poverty, and misery, are seen in their strongest colours; that farmers, tradesmen, and shopkeepers, are become one mass of insolvents; that thousands of virtuous, and industrious, and frugal families are either ruined, or are on the verge of ruin; and the consequent want of employment amongst the labouring classes has led to a state of want and misery such as no people on earth, much less English people, ever before had to endure.

"That your petitioners ascribe this disgraceful and fearful state of things to the changes in the value of money, arbitrarily made by your Honourable House, and unaccompanied with a reduction of the taxes; because, by that change, the taxes have, during the last fifteen years, been more than doubled in amount.

"That your petitioners, therefore, pray that your Honourable House will cause to be made a great and immediate reduction in the taxes; and that you will be pleased to begin by totally abolishing the burdensome and cruel taxes on malt, hops, leather, soap, and candles, (laughter,) all of which are intolerably oppressive to farmers, to labourers, and to all the tradesmen and others depending on the cultivation of the land.

"And your petitioners will ever pray."

It went a little beyond the requisition, as the meeting would have seen. The distress, as he had described it, was intolerable, though he might possibly have used too strong language. (It is correct.) The Hon. Baronet concluded by saying, that he hoped to see the time when the repeal of taxation, such as he prayed for, would be carried into effect. (Applause.)

Sir ROBERT HERON begged to set the Hon. Baronet right as to county meetings. A county meeting was legal when called by the magistrates as well as when called by the Sheriff or by the Lord Lieutenant, and that was as much a county meeting as if the Sheriff had presided.

Mr. CHOLMELEY differed from the Hon. Baronet in not thinking the country in such desperate circumstances as he seemed to suppose. He might, indeed, think our circumstances desperate if he could not trace the measures which caused our distress; but every measure which had produced evil, was distinctly known, so that the steps which it was necessary to retrace, to restore our prosperity, were plainly before us. There was no cause to despair, though he, for one, must say that he thought the agriculturists had partly been the cause of their own distress. ("How, how?") They had partly caused it by their extreme apathy. Like charity, they had believed and hoped, and suffered all. The reason why the Ministers had not taken off the taxes on malt and beer was, that they, like other people, were ready to attend to the most clamorous. The Ministers had given relief to those who had been constantly and steadily asking it of them. Now, the agriculturists could hold out no longer, and, as had been said, the contest was soon coming between the fundholders and the landlords. If the agriculturists did not take care of their own interests, they might be sure the Ministers would pass them over. He formed this opinion from the eagerness he noticed in several weekly and daily journals, to decry the agriculturists; and in particular there was one journal which he noticed because of its great influence, but which displayed most lamentable ignorance on all questions connected with the agricultural interest. Its sentiments, too, were those of wishing to destroy that interest. It seemed to think that the gentlemen of that part of the country were born under a fenny atmosphere, and could not comprehend their own interest. But he would add, that the meeting would regard him as thick-witted if he did any more than touch on such a topic in such weather. He wished to see the malt and beer duties repealed, but he was afraid that this would only be like a drop in the ocean. There were many other taxes which must be repealed; many other laws which must be amended; and there were many other causes of their distress of more importance than these duties, to which he could not even allude. There was the currency also, which had added, as they all knew, one-fourth to all their charges, and had increased the value of all public taxes and salaries. By an arbitrary and most unjust change, by violent operation, their property and the property of all the industrious parts of the community had been altered in its value. (The meeting expressed some impatience at being detained.) Mr. Cholmeley therefore concluded by expressing his satisfaction at the respectability of the meeting, and declared, though he had not very sanguine hopes of attaining their object, yet the consequence of that meeting would be important, and, it would not, he hoped, be without some effects on the authorities of the country.

Mr. HEALY expressed his satisfaction at hearing what had fallen from Sir W. Ingleby, as he had been one of the Hon. Baronet's tutors, and had taken some pains to make him

aware of the true situation of the country. He also expressed his satisfaction at the respectability and great numbers of the meeting.

Mr. T. SMITH said a few words to recommend Parliamentary Reform to the attention of the meeting, but the cold had made the farmers so impatient, and their usual dinner hour having nearly arrived, they cut Mr. Smith very short. He said that they could not expect any reform in the expenditure as long as the Parliament was unreformed, and he therefore hoped they would next petition for Parliamentary Reform.

Before the meeting broke up,

Colonel SIBTHORPE proposed that they should consider the propriety of calling another county meeting, to discuss the question of the general distress. (Bravo.)

Colonel JOHNSON would readily agree to the proposal, but he hoped the meeting would not be called till the weather was warmer.

The CHAIRMAN then read the petition and the amendment, and afterwards put them to the vote, when the amendment was rejected, no person but the mover, that we could see, holding up his hand for it; and the petition, as at first proposed by Col. Johnson, was unanimously agreed to.

Col. JOHNSON stated, that the petition would soon be ready for signature, and he hoped the people would sign it numerously. It would subsequently be sent round to the different market towns, and would lie there for signature.

Sir W. INGLEBY moved the thanks of the meeting to the gentlemen who first signed the requisition for calling a county meeting, and also to the magistrates who had, on the Sheriff's refusal, called the county together; and also to Mr. Handley, one of them, for his able and impartial conduct in the chair.

Sir C. F. BROOMHEAD seconded this motion, which was carried by acclamation.

Mr. HANDLEY, in the name of his brother magistrates and in his own name, returned his thanks to the meeting. He congratulated the persons present on the propriety of their proceedings; he was pleased to see so numerous and respectable an assembly; he was glad of their unanimity, and he sincerely trusted that the next time they met he should have to congratulate them on the success of their exertions, and on having obtained the object they had then met to petition for. He hoped, with Col. Johnson, they would cease to see the exciseman walking through the land, or standing in the streets. He hoped, too, that the brewers' monopoly would be done away; and that he would sell most beer who brewed it the best and cheapest. (Great applause.) Mr. Handley then declared the meeting dissolved.

Long before this period the people had gone away in considerable numbers, under the influence of the cold and damp ground, it being covered with snow. In a few minutes the Castle-yard was entirely clear, every body appearing anxious to get into warmer quarters.